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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT
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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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SUBJECT: "Time to Transplant"--information from plant scientists, U.S. Department of Agriculture

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It's getting to be the time of year to think about transplanting trees and shrubs...if you go in for that sort of thing.

Many people do...but they demur...maybe because they haven't always had such good luck. It's true that moving trees and shrubs from one place to another subjects them to shock...but that can be avoided if you'll take a few precautions.

The first thing to know is the type of trees and shrubs which are relatively easy to move...elms, maples, spirea, and bush honeysuckle are among these.

And the size is important. Young trees and shrubs transplant better than older ones...but it's possible to move those of almost any size. Deciduous trees up to 6 or 8 feet tall...shrubs 2 to 4 feet...and evergreen trees 2 to 5 feet... are recommended.

Anything higher can be moved...but it usually requires heavier equipment than the home gardener has...so call your local nurserymen if you're going to transplant on a high scale.

You'll also have to consider the condition under which shrubs and trees were grown. Usually those that have been cultivated and trained in a nursery will move more easily than those grown in the wild.

The reason is that the trained ones have a more compact and well-distributed root system...while the wild ones often have long taproots and a poor supply of root branches.

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But probably you already have your eye on a particular shrub...a rosebush perhaps...that you want to transplant this fall. If so, here are some hints for you. Remember that the aim is to save as many roots as possible in an uninjured condition. To start, mark a circle around the bush the size of the ball of soil that you wish to leave around the roots.

Then...dig a trench outside this circle--that's to keep the soil around the roots undisturbed. Now form the ball by paring the soil downward from the top. The depth depends upon the location of the roots. Cut the soil underneath away... leaving just enough under the center to support the ball...while you wrap and tie burlap around it.

When this is done...the tree is ready to be moved. Remember that it's best to transplant your bush as soon as possible after it's dug...to avoid possible deterioration while the roots are out of the ground.

Another good point is that the holes for planting should be large enough to allow the roots to spread out...without bending them. And plant the bush at about the same depth that it grew previously.

Don't worry about that burlap around the roots...just cut the twine and draw the burlap back from the top. Now give the bush a thorough watering and let it begin to grow. It should recover from its transplanting fairly well after one season of growth.

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